

Triaxomera fulvimitrella (Lepidoptera: Tineidae) rediscovered in Belgium after almost 70 years of absence

Steve Wullaert

Abstract. Hitherto only one specimen of *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Sodoffsky, 1830) was known from Belgium. On 05 June 2010, during a moth inventory in the Wijnendaele Forest at Torhout (Belgium, West Flanders), 12 specimens of this species were counted, 8 during the day on tree trunks and 4 during the night on light. The species lives on fungi and dead wood and apparently establishes a strong population in this forest.

Samenvatting. *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Lepidoptera: Tineidae), opnieuw ontdekt in België na bijna 70 jaar afwezigheid. Het exemplaar van *Triaxomera rufimitrella* (Sodoffsky, 1830) dat in 1941 werd gevangen was het enige dat ooit werd waargenomen in België, maar na 69 jaar is er zekerheid dat de soort terug in België voorkomt en wel talrijk. Op 5 juni 2010 werden er tijdens een inventarisatie te Torhout, in het Wijnendaelebos maar liefst 12 exemplaren van deze soort waargenomen: 8 stuks overdag op boomstammen en 4 tijdens de nachtvangst. Deze soort komt voor op zwammen en dood hout en heeft blijkbaar een goede populatie in het domein.

Résumé. *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Lepidoptera: Tineidae), redécouverte en Belgique après une absence de presque 70 ans.

Le premier exemplaire de *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Sodoffsky, 1830) fût trouvé en Belgique en 1941 et jusque maintenant c'est le seul exemplaire connu. Après 69 ans il est certain que cette espèce vit en Belgique et bien en nombre. Le 5 juin 2010, pendant un inventaire à Torhout, dans le Wijnendaelebos, pas moins de 12 exemplaires de cette espèce furent trouvés: 8 pendant la journée sur des troncs d'arbres et 4 pendant la nuit. La chenille se nourrit avec des champignons et du bois mort. L'espèce a une bonne population dans ce forêt.

Key words: *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* – Faunistics – First record – Belgium.

Wullaert, S.: Vaartstraat 18, B-8710 Wielsbeke, Belgium. sw.demijnen@gmail.com

Introduction

On 5 June 2010, during a moth inventory at Torhout, domain "Wijnendaelebos" we were able to find 12 specimens of *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Sodoffsky, 1830). The species is not new for the Belgian fauna because one female was caught at Sourbrodt near Malmédy, Liège in June 1941, leg. Stamm (De Prins 1998: 31). Although the catalogue compiled by De Crombrughe (1906: 147)

mentions the species in the alphabetical index, it has no entry in the main text. So, after 69 years there is certainty about the presence of *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* in Belgium. The moths we found were all resting on beech trees and were easily disturbed the moment we passed by one of those trees. It was very easy to find 8 specimens that way. The other 4 specimens were found during the night, lured by a 250W lamp.



Figs. 1–4. *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* (Sodoffsky, 1830). Torhout, Wijnendaelebos (Belgium, West-Flanders), 05.vi.2010, leg. and photos S. Wullaert.

Due to a good forest management the species developed a good population in the “Wijnendaelebos”. The domain were we found the species measures about 4 km² and consists of a private forest, a reserve forest and a forest part accessible for everyone. In this accessible part we have a one year permission to make the inventory of leaf miners and Lepidoptera in general. The forest contains a wide variety of trees like birch (*Betula*), oak (*Quercus*), sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), cherry (*Prunus*), alder (*Alnus*), pine (*Pinus*), lime (*Tilia*) and many old beech trees (*Fagus*).

Biology

Trioxomera fulvimitrella flies in one generation from May till July and the specimens are easily found resting on tree trunks. The head and palps are ochreous yellowish. The moth has a purple shine as seen in fig. 1. Typical are the 4 white dots, which can vary in shape and size (Snellen 1882). The larva is whitish yellow with a dark brown head, a black upper side with two brown spots (Meyrick 1895). The larva is very similar to the one of *Trioxomera parasitella* (Heath 1983). It lives from decaying wood and fungi including *Inonotus radiatus* (Alder bracket) and *Piptoporus betulinus* (Birch bracket) (Meyrick 1895). The caterpillars are also found on callus-tissue around tree wounds. They are fully grown in April (Heath 1983).

Distribution

The moth is well spread in Europe, it is present in Austria, Britain Isles, Danish mainland, Finland, French mainland, Germany, Norwegian mainland, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands. In eastern Europe it has been recorded from Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kaliningrad Region, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia Central / North / Northwest / South, Slovakia, Ukraine and Yugoslavia (Karsholt & van Nieukerken 2010). In The Netherlands the species was known until 1882 only from the province of Groningen (Snellen 1882). But nowadays the species is more frequently observed in that country. Since 2006, 6 specimens were recorded: 1 in 2006, 1 in 2008 and 4 in 2010, all of them in the north of The Netherlands, in the province of Friesland and Drenthe (www.waarnemingen.nl).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the people who could ensure that we got the opportunity to make observations in the domain “Wijnendaelebos” and to Willy De Prins for commenting on this paper.

References

- De Crombrugghe 1906. Catalogue raisonné des Microlépidoptères de Belgique. — *Mémoires de la Société entomologique de Belgique* 13: 1–172, 14: 1–155.
- Meyrick E. 1895. *A handbook of British Lepidoptera*. — Macmillan and Co, London and New York, 843p.
- Snellen P. C. T. 1882. *De vlinders van Nederland*. — E. J. Brill, Leiden, 536p.
- Heath J. 1983. *The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland VolII Cossidae – Helioidinidae*. — Harley books, Essex, 460p.
- De Prins W. 1998. Catalogue of the Lepidoptera of Belgium. — *Studiedocumenten van het Koninklijk Belgisch Instituut voor Natuurwetenschappen* 92: 1–236.
- Waarnemingen.nl [visited 10 September 2010].
- Karsholt O. & van Nieukerken E. J. 2004. Fauna Europaea, Tineidae. — In: Karsholt, O. & van Nieukerken, E.J. (eds.) *Lepidoptera, Moths, Fauna Europaea version 1.3*, — www.fauaeur.org [visited 10 september 2010].